



**Connecticut Farm Bureau Association**

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Submitted by: Don Tuller, President of The Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

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The following testimony is submitted on behalf of Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of over 5,000 member families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, and Members of the Environment Committee:

**Raised Bill No. 5416: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LIVESTOCK CARE STANDARDS ADVISORY COUNCIL AND PROHIBITING THE USE OF CERTAIN ENCLOSURES FOR GESTATION SOWS.**

This bill, as presented, starts well, (section 1) and ends poorly (section 2). We urge you to adopt the Animal Care Standards Advisory Council section and that will make the ban on gestation crates essentially unnecessary. Please delete Section 2.

There are no farmers that routinely use gestation crates in Connecticut currently. You should know that the way that they are used, is when an animal needs to be separated from her pen mates, either because she is not eating well, is sick and needs medication, or to heal from an injury, she might be put in a gestation crate temporarily, until she gets better, before returning to her group. That's how farmers in Connecticut use gestation crates, only when they need to, so they can provide the best possible care for their animals. This bill would take away this management tool, only able to be used at the direction of a veterinarian. That extra expense will encourage farmers to let the animal try to fend for herself, rather than giving her the individual care sooner, hoping to avoid the expense of getting a veterinarian involved. Some people are supporting the gestation crate ban because they think that it will keep out large confinement hog farms. I can assure you that that mission has already been accomplished. Those facilities locate near to where the feed is produced, to reduce their cost of operation. Farmers in the Northeast pay higher freight fares per ton/mile than other parts of the country. In addition, our reputation as an business unfriendly, high cost state, would make the need to ban gestation crates, about as necessary as putting a no parking sign on the roof to discourage aliens from landing. HSUS has stated that they are looking for a "symbolic" victory, further proof that a ban is not needed. They are even saying that you would be helping small farmers, by keeping out competition. We actually need more farmers raising pigs, not less. A large pig raising operation would help small farmers by helping to support the infrastructure that is badly needed. It would not hurt the price that small farmers get, it might reduce their costs. How about giving Connecticut Farmers a symbolic victory by eliminating Section 2 of this bill because it really isn't needed. If you have concerns, give the issue to the Livestock Care Standards Advisory Council to report back on. Please adopt Section 1 and delete section 2.

Thank you: Don Tuller President of the Connecticut Farm Bureau Association